



THE TALON *F.Y.I.*

VOL 2, NO 5

TASK FORCE EAGLE, TUZLA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

FEB 16, 1996

News Briefs

Division band available

The 1st Armored Division Band is now available for musical commitments. They are capable of performing a wide selection of music for any military function, troop morale activity or church service. Task Force Eagle units interested in requesting the 1st Armored Division Band are asked to send a memorandum to the address below or call the band's operating section at MSE 558-5743.

Commander
1st Armored Division Band
Attn: Operations Section
Operation Joint Endeavor
APO AE 09789

Chaplain's corner

Catholic field Masses are now celebrated at Guardian Base (at the "Blue Factory") Sundays at 1 p.m.; 1st Armored Division DISCOM at Lukavac "Gotham City" (in the Mess Tent) Sundays at 3 p.m.; and Tuzla East/UNIS Factory on Wednesdays at 2 p.m. (in the cafeteria).

Radar guns arrive

Lead foots beware. The 18th Military Police Brigade received eight new radar guns and are using them to deter speeding in the American Sector.

The speed limits in troop areas will be 5 mph; bases are 10 MPH, cities 20 mph; built-up areas 25 MPH, and highways 40 mph. The 18th MP Brigade is the command and control headquarters for all U.S. MPs in Bosnia.

Task Force newcomers

Soldiers new to Task Force Eagle should be aware there are land mines and unexploded ordnance over many of the American camp areas. Some areas are marked with barbed wire and signs. Stay on hard-topped roads and pavement where mines have been cleared.

Water at many U.S. base camps is not potable. Soldiers should use bottled water for drinking and brushing their teeth.

Talon expands coverage.
See column, page 2



Sgt. Mark Faram

Gen. John Shalikashvili autographs a toy football for Sgt. 1st Class Otis Hunter (right), who is based with the 7-227th Aviation at Tuzla West.

Shalikashvili lauds Eagle troops

By Spc. Cesar G. Soriano
29th MPAD

TUZLA WEST — Gen. John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited servicemembers at Tuzla West Feb. 9, calling the troops of Task Force Eagle "absolutely magnificent."

Shalikashvili toured 4th Brigade headquarters at Tuzla West, on a cold, snowy morning, stopping frequently to chat with soldiers at their workplaces and barracks.

"You all are in a dangerous place and have a very tough job under some of the most complex, political, military kind of circumstances that anybody would ever want to wish upon you,"

he told a mixed audience of American, British and Russian military personnel, "and I just have to tell you my admiration for how well you're doing (your job)."

Shalikashvili said without America's involvement in IFOR, "there wouldn't be a chance that peace would come to this land. And, as you so well know, there's no guarantee that with you here, that's going to happen. But you're the best chance they've got."

At a press conference, Shalikashvili denounced the recent tension between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs over the kidnapping of Serbian Gen. Djordje Djukic, and threats against IFOR soldiers.

See *Shalikashvili*, page 8

Engineers set for move to new base camp

By Sgt. Christina Steiner
203rd MPAD

TUZLA EAST — After nearly two months of wading through the mud and bracing against the cold at Zupanja and this isolated U.S. Army engineer compound, soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Engineer Brigade, should move to a more permanent, cleaner and more comfortable base by the end of February, leaders have said. The new

camp, located about a quarter of a mile from the current one, will be called Steel Castle.

The U.S. Air Force's RED HORSE field engineering team and the 94th Engineer Battalion have been working for the past two weeks to unload large gravel and rock onto the new base camp site, and last week most of the permanent tents, equipped with wooden walls and floors, were erected.

See *Steel Castle*, page 8

From the top

Leaders, remember NCOERs and NCOES

Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR requires challenges of every leader, but regardless of other commitments, leaders must ensure their soldiers do not fall behind in their professional development, including attending the appropriate school under the Noncommissioned Officer Education System.

Leaders also must make sure NCO Evaluation Reports are submitted on time, and that awards and promotions are timely and well-deserved.

Make sure you regularly counsel your soldiers so they have a chance to correct any deficiencies before their annual NCOERs are completed. As we all know,



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Jack L. Tilley**
1st Armored Division

NCOERs are required annually for all noncommissioned officers, and there is no excuse for turning them in late.

No NCOER should ever come as a surprise to a soldier. Think of the NCOER as an excellent management tool and use it to help mold a good NCO into a great leader. Remember, you are that NCO's mentor and your comments on an NCOER can influence his duty performance in the short run and his career in the long run.

It's important for each soldier to make sure his records are updated, and NCOERs play a key role in an NCO's 201 File as it appears before promotion boards and throughout his career.

Many Task Force Eagle leaders

have recently had questions about conditional promotions. If a soldier was scheduled to attend an NCOES school (PLDC, for example), but was then deployed on Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, a DA Form 4187 can be submitted requesting a conditional promotion. The soldier must be mission-essential, meet the required cut-off score and be fully qualified to attend PLDC.

State on the 4187 the fact the soldier is mission-essential — plus the date he would have attended PLDC had he not deployed. The paperwork is then routed through the Personnel Service Battalion and on to Department of the Army, Personnel Service Command.

In dealing with the often hectic schedule of a deployment, we leaders may have a tendency to neglect certain issues that don't seem critical

at the time, such as putting our soldiers in for awards.

If you have a soldier who has done an outstanding job and is about to PCS or ETS, reward him for his efforts by recommending him for an award. We do our best to retain good soldiers in the Army, and awards are one way of showing a soldier that we truly appreciate the job he or she has done. Move the category of "awards" up closer to the top of your priority list and make it happen.

Finally, the commanding general has directed that all soldiers traveling outside of base camps will travel in four-vehicle convoys with at least one crew-served weapon. As I have traveled around the Task Force Eagle area, I have seen some units in violation of this policy. You, as leaders, need to enforce this standard.

Talon dedicated to broader coverage of Task Force Eagle

We had another column lined up to fill this space this week, but we decided to bump it at the last minute and replace it. Why? Because we want to let you soldiers out there know we have heard you loud and clear.

After being in Bosnia-Herzegovina for one month and putting out three issues of *The Talon* (this is our fourth), we have begun to get feedback from the field that we are taking to heart. The troops have spoken and what they are saying has not exactly been complimentary.

We have heard through the grapevine, and through letters and other comments, that some soldiers in Task Force Eagle believe that we are not sufficiently covering the many units involved in this operation. We are now here to tell you



**Sgt. 1st Class
Bettina E. Tilson**
29th MPAD

that we are dedicated to fixing that problem.

One letter in particular from 1st Lt. Chris Jenks, an LNO from 2nd BCT, got our attention.

"Well-meaning though your newsletter may be, I don't think you realize it's counter-productive effect on unit morale," Jenks wrote. The infantry lieutenant explained that down at 2nd BCT, "we still live in tents, use a burnout latrine and are surrounded by the ruins of an ethnically cleansed village."

Despite the fact that 2nd BCT has AFRTS capability, the brigade's subordinate units did not watch the Super Bowl because many did not have radios or television. Running a front-page photo in our second issue that included a soldier saying, "It's a great feeling to have a

TV to watch the game" was not exactly a morale booster to troops who weren't so fortunate, Jenks pointed out.

"It's a bad feeling to not watch the game, made worse by reading your newsletter," he wrote. Jenks suggested we spend a little more time thinking about the stories and photos we run because our purpose is to "improve morale, not lower it."

Well, 1st Lt. Jenks, you're absolutely right.

While all of us are living at various comfort levels (and there is obviously nothing *The Talon* can do about that), we certainly can try harder to cover ALL of Task Force Eagle, which is what you recommended in your letter.

The last thing we want to be is a command information newspaper that serves only Eagle Base. We have troops spread out all over the country and we want to provide in-

formation they will ALL find informative and perhaps even entertaining. We are truly committed to producing a product that serves every single Task Force Eagle soldier.

It took us a while to get all our public affairs assets in place, but we now have teams covering virtually every aspect of the task force.

Slowly, but surely, stories are now beginning to flow in from the field, and we eagerly look forward to printing a good variety of news and features in upcoming issues. But, we need your help to do that. If you have a story idea, drop us a line and let us know what it is. We welcome suggestions and will investigate each idea proposed.

Once again, this is YOUR newspaper. We want to make it a quality publication that you'll be proud to mail home to family and friends. Thanks for your input and keep those ideas coming in!

THE TALON

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Quick takes

MWR update

Morale, Welfare and Recreation sites are now being established at Task Force Eagle base camps.

Tuzla West already has a fitness center, theater, game room and libraries up and running. The MWR managers there are Marlene Novacheck, Taatu Liliu and Kris D'Allessandro.

MWR areas are also being set up at Lukavac, 1st Brigade and Haarmoon. The MWR tent at Tuzla Main is located in Tent No. 9 in Tent City One.

Savings deposit program

All soldiers assigned in Operation Joint Endeavor area of operations are eligible to deposit their unallotted current pay and allowances into a savings account that accrues 10 percent interest annually. The account is compounded quarterly, and the quarterly interest will be computed on the average quarterly balance on deposit. Soldiers may deposit up to \$10,000. The interest terminates 60 to 90 days after departure from the area of operations.

Soldiers can enroll either by allotment (checking "other" and specifying "SDP" on a DD Form 2258) or by making a check or cash deposit using DD Form 1131. Reserve Component personnel can only use the cash collection procedure. For information, see your camp's finance office.

Snow safety tip

The Military Police remind all drivers to take a moment to clear snow and ice off the roofs of their vehicles before driving. Bumps and jolts could cause the ice to fall and hit and injure pedestrians, especially off-post where speed limits are higher.

DOs and DON'Ts of serving in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Do:

- Show complete neutrality.
- Be aware of holy days, prayer days and religious ceremonies of all ethnic groups.
- Show appreciation for local culture and heritage, and respect for customs and beliefs.

Do Not:

- Show favoritism to any factions or make statements that may be misconstrued.
- Display a cross to Muslims, as this symbol may be considered offensive, especially in rural areas.

No pets allowed policy in effect

By Spc. Cesar G. Soriano
29th MPAD

They're cute, cuddly and sometimes follow troops to the dining facility with big puppy-dog eyes.

But no matter how much they meow or howl, Task Force Eagle troops are reminded that dogs — or any other animals — are not allowed.

1st Armored Division policy states that service members may not have pets or mascots. All around the theater, dozens of stray cats and dogs now share the base camps with troops searching for scraps of food.

"Because of the public health hazard, having a pet could be detrimental to yourself and others," said Lt. Col. William S. Besser, division surgeon.

"There are three main problems with

pets," he said. "First, they are not immunized. So if someone gets bit by a stray dog, they have to go through a rabies treatment series.

"Second, they carry fleas and ticks that transmit disease. Third, they nestle all over the place and so their feces might contain worms."

Lt. Col. Dale Williamson, 30th Medical Brigade staff veterinarian, said "If you see a stray animal, don't feed it. Don't pet it so it won't follow you."

Currently, there is no Humane Society-type organization that takes in stray animals. "The best thing to do if someone has been feeding an animal is give it away to a local Bosnian," said Spc. Dawn Walz, a veterinarian specialist.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot of us out there with soft hearts."

'Force field' will protect troops in Bosnia

By Spc. Cesar G. Soriano
29th MPAD

It sounds like something straight out of *Star Trek*: an invisible force field that surrounds a base, protecting personnel on the ground from incoming artillery. But it isn't science fiction — it's a defensive shield called the SHORTSTOP Electronic Protection System. It's designed to shield Task Force Eagle personnel throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina from some types of artillery rounds.

"Basically, it predetonates rounds before they have a chance to hit the ground," said Staff Sgt. Marvin R. Newbill of 1st Armored Division, Force Development section. "It's a dome-type of protection against incoming artillery rounds."

SHORTSTOP is actually nothing more than a box the size of a cooler hooked up to an antenna. "It's a passive device that sits and listens until there is a threat," said Steve Comer, civilian senior project engineer of SHORTSTOP who works for the Night Vision Electronic System Directorate at Fort Monmouth, N.J. Comer explained that when SHORTSTOP senses an incoming round, a special frequency is emitted

which causes an artillery round with a proximity fuse to detonate high above the ground. An ear-piercing tone alerts personnel on the ground of any incoming danger.

Artillery rounds with proximity fuses are designed to detonate at a pre-programmed point above the ground. They are more lethal than point detonation rounds, which detonate when they come into contact with a hard surface.

SHORTSTOP was designed for use in Operation DESERT STORM, where the Iraqis were using many artillery rounds with proximity fuses. The threat of these types of artillery rounds is more minimal in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but Newbill said these rounds were used during the four-year civil war here. Comer said the former Yugoslavia was a major producer of these types of rounds, and there are more than 250 manufacturers of proximity fuse devices in the world.

SHORTSTOP systems protect a radius about the size of two football stadiums. Newbill says the systems will be set up "at every (American) base camp or command post" within Task Force Eagle.

'Blue Dart' handles urgent transmissions

By Sgt. 1st Class Bettina E. Tilson
29th MPAD

Transmitting critical messages during an operation such as JOINT ENDEAVOR is vital, and soldiers in the field should know that the "Blue Dart" notification system is in place to handle urgent transmissions.

"The system is designed to get messages from echelons above the division level down to the lowest level as rapidly as possible," said Maj. Tom O'Sullivan, G3 operations officer.

The Blue Dart system is part of Task Force Eagle's overall force protection. "The goal is to (get a message) from the division level to the platoon level within 10 minutes of receipt of the message," he said.

In most cases, a Blue Dart message is transmitted to a certain geographical or particular unit if that unit's force protection is threatened.

"If somebody hears 'Blue Dart,' they are to drop everything and disseminate the message as quickly as possible," he said.

Task Force Eagle officials have already successfully tested the Blue Dart system. "We've gotten the message to the people who need to receive it," O'Sullivan said.

So what does the average Task Force Eagle soldier need to know about Blue Dart? He needs to know there is a system in place that is focused on his protection should a threat arise, and that a Blue Dart message should be handled with the highest priority.

Special canines wear MP badge of courage

By **Spc. Rick Roth**
29th MPAD

Military Police, like their civilian counterparts, need to count on their partners to back them up when they get in trouble. Unlike most police partners, Staff Sgt. William Dorr's partner is a Dutch Shepherd named Linda.

"Dogs won't run or get scared, ... You can always count on your dog," said Dorr, a dog handler with 14 years of experience, and member of the 98th Area Support Group from Wurzburg, attached to the 18th Military Police Company while in Bosnia.

Staff Sgt. Hugh Bell, a dog handler with the 53rd Area Support Group from Bad Kreuznach, attached to the 18th Military Police Company in Bosnia, had two cousins that served as MPs in Vietnam. One was a dog handler.

"You've got to like dogs," said Bell explaining the most basic job requirement of the voluntary job. "People don't realize the amount of personal time we put into the dogs," he said.

Handlers are responsible for feeding and around-the-clock care of their dogs.

The U.S. military mainly uses the Belgian Malinois and Dutch shepherd. Dogs are dual-certified in explosive detection and security and begin their training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. The length of training depends on each dog.

When the dogs finish their training they are attached to a unit and assigned to a handler. Normally, an explosives dog will work with only one MP for its entire service period.

Dorr has spent the majority of the last two years working with Linda, a four-year-old dog.

"One of the controlling factors of the dog's rapport with you is your rapport with the dog," Dorr said.

The team recently earned a first-place award in the category of explosives detection in a U.S. Army Europe-wide canine contest.

Each dog reacts subtly different upon finding explosives. It may be



Sgt. Mark Faram

Staff Sgt. William Dorr and his dog Linda guard a Task Force Eagle gate.

as small a detail as whether the dog's ears go back or stand straight up. Whatever the reaction, it is up to the handler to recognize it. Teamwork is imperative.

"It all goes back to your confidence in your dog," Dorr said. "Linda is very impressive to watch when looking for explosives."

Dogs are trained to search for explosives using a "passive response" technique. This involves rewarding the dog with a ball or other incentive upon locating explosives.

The dogs are also being used on patrol and gate security, and in that capacity the dogs are a big psychological deterrent, Dorr said.

Bell said he gets satisfaction from knowing that people feel safer when they see him and his dog Brenda out working.

"Some people say they're government equipment," Bell said, "We say they're more than that; they're our partners."

Purple Heart recipient recalls recent mine strike

By **Sgt. 1st Class Gary Younger**
358th MPAD

The last thing Spc. Glen Hobbs heard before he lost consciousness was a deafening explosion. The Bradley Fighting Vehicle he was driving was rocked and lifted in the air by the force of the blast. When he awoke, he heard a soldier screaming over the radio, "Mine strike! Mine strike!"

The incident happened Feb. 4, when Hobbs and two other crew members of the BFV were traveling in a convoy with other soldiers from the 4th Battalion,

12th Infantry, near Vukajlovic in the zone of separation. The soldiers were on a routine patrol, and Hobbs, a Hudson, Fla., native, was being careful to stay in the tracks of the lead vehicles as he had been trained IFOR soldiers participating in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia are constantly warned about mines and given safety

instructions. Suddenly, just before 2 p.m., things suddenly went awry.

A fierce explosion shocked the BFV with a force so strong, it lifted the vehicle clean off the ground, shearing the left, rear track. Hobbs and his two fellow crew members were tossed about, even to the point of Hobbs' seat in the vehicle breaking.

"I remember an explosion and I saw stuff flying," Hobbs said. "I was going up in the air at the same time and I hit my head on the top of the hatch."

Fortunately, Hobbs was wearing his crewman's helmet.

Hobbs was knocked unconscious. A moment later, he awoke to find his fellow soldiers, who were uninjured, asking him if he was all right. He said his entire back was sore. Hobbs was carried out of the damaged BFV, placed in a HMMWV and evacuated to a safer location so medics could treat his injuries.

He was later taken to the 212th Mobile

Army Surgical Hospital, where doctors discovered he had a broken bone in his lower back and his appendix was damaged. His appendix was later removed.

"When (the doctors at 212th MASH) took x-rays, they said I had a broken bone in my back," Hobbs said.

Three days later in a short ceremony at the aide station at Eagle Base, Hobbs, who was strapped to a stretcher, was awarded the Purple Heart by Maj. Gen. William L. Nash, 1st Armored Division and Task Force Eagle commander.

"It's hard to say congratulations and that I'm happy to give this to you," Nash said, as he leaned over Hobbs. "This is a very sacred medal, because it is the first medal of our nation, and it bears the image of our first commander in chief (George Washington). You paid a dear price for this."

Hobbs was flown to an Army hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, for further treatment and rehabilitation. He was joined there by his wife, Carol. He also has a 10-month-old daughter, Jackie.

**'I remember an explosion
and I saw stuff flying.'**

— Spc. Glen Hobbs

Post Exchanges open throughout Bosnia

First day sales at one site totaled \$35,000 worth of soda, snacks and radios

By Pfc. Jody Johnston
358th MPAD

After weeks of anticipation, three new post exchanges were opened up by the Army-Air Force Exchange Service Feb. 9 in Lukavac, Tuzla West and Tuzla Main.

Ten stores are planned throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, with many being opened later this month in brigade operating bases, including near the towns of Gradacac and Sljivici in the 1st Brigade area. Second Brigade will be serviced by a store near Vlasenica.

Hundreds of people stood in line at the Tuzla West and Tuzla Main stores for their Feb. 9 opening. A whopping \$35,000 in sales was recorded on the first day, said John

McGhee, store manager. The hottest-selling items were chips, soft drinks and personal radio/tape players.

"I think it's going to be a major contribution to the mission," McGhee said. "For the soldiers who are out in the field seven days a week, I think this adds a little touch of home and more of an American lifestyle."

At least one soldier thinks morale will be boosted by the presence of the PX.

"I think it's great that the PX is opening up," said Capt. Robert A. Jensen, commander of the 54th Quartermaster Company. "It will be a real morale booster to the troops and add a bit more normalcy to life here." A variety of products are available. Roughly 400 different items can be found at the PX.

"We're going to be selling everything from magazines to greeting cards, stationery, cleaning products, hygiene, food and snacks, clothing and basic necessities, blankets, compact discs and tapes, and electronic cameras," McGhee said. "Later on we're going to be having souvenir items such as T-shirts, and coffee mugs (printed) with Bosnia and Herzegovina IFOR missions."

The largest PX takes up 7,200 square feet with a third of it used for retail, McGhee said.

Payment may only be made by cash and check at first. Credit cards and DPP (Deferred Payment Plan) are not currently offered.

All store hours are seven days a week, noon to 8 p.m.

Postal Company offers tips on packing boxes properly

By Spc. George Roache
29th MPAD

Pfc. Joseph Allen recalls getting a face full of foot powder from a package he was handling at the post office.

"The goods in the box were too heavy and it was already split," said Allen, a mail handler with 2nd Platoon, 115th Postal Company, in Bad Kreuznach, Germany. "When I set the box down, the powder exploded in my face and went right up my nose."

Liquid detergent in another package ruptured in transit, destroying the box it was mailed in and five other soldiers' mail in the bag, said Sgt. Steven Howard, also of the 115th.

Other times, they've lifted other boxes out of mail bags only to have them fall open and the contents roll all over the floor. They've found packages of broken bottles spilling from some packages. Allen once cut his hand on broken glass.

Neither rain, nor sleet nor dead of night will keep postmen from their appointed rounds, the saying goes, but having to repack poorly wrapped containers can slow down delivery, say mail handlers at Tuzla Main's central military postal service center.

So can improper addresses and pick-up of mail by unit mail carriers, they add.

Those delays take time away from the post office's huge volume of mail.

On average, the postal center sorts 1,000 pieces of mail per day for 150 separate organizations,

said Capt. Elizabeth Cisne, 115th Co. commander. Sixty-five of the unit's soldiers are at Tuzla Main with the remainder at four other direct support locations in the field.

"That equates to roughly 25,000 pounds or 10 pallets a day," she said. "On our busiest days, Feb. 9 and 10, we sorted 1,700 pieces on those days. That worked out to more than 40,000 pounds, or 20 tons, by hand."

Improper addressing takes the biggest toll on timely mail delivery, Howard said.

"One platoon may have 16 people attached to five different units, or one unit may be in four different locations," Howard said. "We don't know where to send it if the address is not complete. And some units move faster than we can catch up with them. Mail going to where they were adds to the delay."

Units that don't pick up their mail every day during the center's posted hours not only delay mail for their own soldiers but for everyone because of the lack of space to do sorting, said Spc. DeAndre Horne of the 566th Postal Company in Wurzburg and attached to 4th Platoon, 118th Postal Co. in Tuzla. Units don't always send their assigned mail clerks who know the system, and the soldiers sent instead don't know the proper mail to pick up.

Postal workers at Tuzla Main offer the following tips for mailers to minimize delays in delivery:

- Do not send glass or items that contain liquids.



Sgt. Mark Faram

Spc. Sullena Roman of the 212th Military Police Battalion in Tuzla West sifts the post office for her unit's mail.

- If glass or liquids are sent, wrap each item separately.
 - Use sturdy boxes. Line them with wadded newspaper or Styrofoam peanuts. Form bottom and side cushions. Place bottles in a plastic liner.
 - Mail like items, such as cans with cans.
 - Pack containers fully so contents will not shift, but do not overstuff.
 - Use filament tape or reinforced paper tape, not regular paper tape, on heavy boxes.
 - When addressing mail, use the unit the soldier is assigned to in Bosnia, not the base unit. Include that unit's location.
- Soldiers and units should inform the postal center and senders of address changes.

Soldiers climb mountaintop to establish communications

By Staff Sgt. Colin Ward
358th MPAD

MOUNT KUNJUH, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Rays of sunshine peeked through strands of trees, casting shadows along the narrow, winding, rutted road that leads to the top of Mount Kunjuh, near Klandanj. In early February, plenty of snow was evident on the peaks and valleys of the surrounding area.

A convoy of four vehicles, led by Capt. Vincent Johnston, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade, inched its way toward the top. Atop this steep and rugged mountain road was a small detachment of Bosnian soldiers occupying a snug communications outpost.

Communications specialists from 2nd Brigade were to gain access to this mountain-top encampment and set up a radio retransmission site. Johnston and his convoy made their way up the mountain and began to set up.

The following day, Capt. Steven Marcontell, HHC, 2nd Brigade, plans officer, led another convoy back to the hilltop to set and run the retransmission equipment. With the cooperation of the residing Bosnian soldiers, the convoy was able to move swiftly to the retransmission site. The site was then proofed and cleared of land mines.

"The hilltop's height and location were factors toward its selection (as a retrans site)," explained Capt. Larry Gordon, signal officer, HHC, 2nd Brigade. Mount Kunjuh stands more than 4,400 feet high and overlooks dozens of other mountains and hills spanning hundreds of miles.

"We can contact our higher headquarters and supporting units from this point. When the retransmission is complete, everyone will be able to communicate with each other directly," Gordon said.

After the site was cleared of mines, signal specialists Cpl. Arthur Travieso, Pfc. Christopher Graham and Pfc. Christopher Carter began to unload and set up the retransmission equipment.

The three soldiers attached poles, affixed guide ropes, hammered support spikes and connected cables to the 40-foot antenna. Within 30 minutes, the crew raised and secured the retrans antenna.

Following the construction of a second antenna, the soldiers will also set up a base camp. The retransmission point is staffed by signal specialists and a force protection elements at all times.

French, Belgians and Americans join forces to move supplies

By Spc. William Hall
203rd MPAD

LUKAVAC — French, Belgian and American soldiers recently pooled their resources to deliver supplies among U.S. units located all over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Tons of supplies such as food, water, fuel and spare vehicle parts have been delivered here to Lukavac and were targeted for distribution to different units all over the sector. The equipment that was available to units here was not enough to deal with the influx of all the containers that housed the supplies, so coordination was made to organize a multinational force to help with the move, said Maj. Jay Warren, assistant G4, 1st Armored Division.

"The problem was that we received too much too fast," Warren said. "Within a week's time we went from 100 to 500 containers. We were pushing out 20 to 25 a day based on our capacity, but when you receive 60 to 80 a day, there's no way you can keep up."

Of the eight pallet loading systems available for use here, only five are operational. "We've run them into the ground," Warren said. The force of 31 French, 14 British and 16 Belgian soldiers started to move in Feb. 5 to provide assistance, and they stayed about five days.

"The assistance was asked for in order to move the containers because there were not

enough logistics here to get them out," Sgt. Maj. Aian Wilkie, 2-6 Regiment, Royal Artillery, from the British element of the Implementation Force. The British provided Improved Medium-ability Load Carriers to assist in the movement of containers.

"It's been good here," Wilkie said. "The lads have been out. They've been fed and watered and have a tent to live in that's got heating in it."

"They were a tremendous help," Warren said. "We could have used them more efficiently, but the weather has been very difficult."

Containers were moved from here to places such as Tuzla Main, Tuzla East and Tuzla West.

"They did a good job," Warren said. "With the mission we gave them, there were no complaints and many times they worked until late at night. The biggest problems were language and not knowing the capabilities of the trucks they had until they arrived."

Warren said that there are plans to do more projects like this with a multinational force in the future.

"We are in a multinational situation, and I really enjoy working with the other countries because it gives you an opportunity to compare notes," Warren said. "Considering we are part of NATO and should be more multinational, this gives the soldiers an opportunity to feel that we are all part of a united community."

'Heavy metal' rocks the ZOS



Sgt. 1st Class Jack Lee

BIJELA — Cpl. Keith Diskey of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 23rd Engineer Battalion, tows an old M-47 American tank that was discovered in the zone of separation recently near the town of Bijela. The 23rd Engineer Battalion, nicknamed the "Blade Runners," use a 56-ton, M-88 tank recovery vehicle to assist the former warring parties in removing disabled armor from the ZOS.

Personality of the week

227th mechanic dreams of recording career

By Spc. George Roache
29th MPAD

TUZLA WEST — From her church choir back home to the Apollo Theatre in the Harlem section of New York City, Spc. Erica Cooper of Wharton, Texas, has hit all the right notes in her amateur singing career.

She grew up with such gospel favorites as "Precious Lord," "Blessed Assurance" and "No Greater Love."

Now she's an Apache helicopter avionics technician at Comanche Base, and can render a version of singer Regina Belle's "Make It Like It Was" that will raise more goose bumps than a frigid wind across the flight line. It's a talent she treats with modesty.

"I got started in church," she said. "I know that for sure. Sometimes my sisters ask where I get my voice from and I tell them it's a gift from God."

Cooper attended New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Wharton, 60 miles south of Houston. She joined her church's junior choir at age seven and the adult choir when she turned 13.

Her church and family encouraged her to nurture her talent when she started singing.

"Everybody wanted to know why I joined the Army instead of pursuing my career in singing," she said. "I knew I could sing but I didn't know how well until I got input from outside of my church and family when I came to Germany."

"I'm not the type of person who goes around telling people I can sing and asking if they want to hear me," Cooper said.

She's not shy on stage, however.

While in AIT at Fort Gordon, Ga., she sang "Amazing Grace" in a musical competition. At the Moderaire Club on post in Hanau,

Germany, she did Belle's "If I Could" in a talent show.

And when scouts looking for contestants for "Showtime at the Apollo" came to Germany, she prepared for the July 1994 audition in Kaiserslautern with a practice competition in Darmstadt.

Singing "Make It Like It Was" won her an appearance at the Apollo in December.

She and her husband, Jimmy, had to pay their own way to New York City, but she was there for the 3 p.m. rehearsal and the 8 p.m. audition.

Cooper was the first of the 12 contestants to perform.

"The audience was live — very much so," she said. "You know the old lady who sits up front and is all over everybody? Well, she was there. Her name is Eve and she always jumps up every time anybody sings."

The Apollo audience, legendary for jeering acts off the stage, received Cooper with cheers and applause. "I got no boos at all," she said. "None."

Her mother, Addie Plummer, had come all the way from Wharton to see the performance. Her reaction moved Cooper more than anything the audience could have said or done.

"It was the first time my mother had ever heard me sing anything but gospel," Cooper said. "She was impressed. She had tears in her eyes, my husband told me."

"I felt touched. It made me a little mushy," she said.

Although she lost to an 8-year-old girl who sang Mariah Carey's "Hero," Cooper did well enough overall to be eligible to compete for the next two weeks.

Unfortunately, she couldn't.

"If I was allotted the time and the finances, I would have stayed there longer," she said. "If I had known in advance I would have had to stay three weeks, I would have been prepared ... but we knew no one and had no family there. Everything came



Sgt. Ed Rollins

Spc. Erica Cooper, who tunes Apache avionics equipment, hopes her own tunes will someday lead to stardom.

out of our pockets."

She could go back anytime by just phoning to get booked. One day she will, she said.

Until then she will continue to enjoy working on avionics with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation. She would like to get a civilian job working on Army helicopter avionics equipment after she leaves the service in April 1997, going wherever her husband, a supply sergeant, is assigned.

Although she doesn't have the details worked out yet, she will resume her singing career then as well, and maybe even cut an album.

And when she has the one child she is planning, she wants him or her to know the joy of singing as she has known it.

"I like singing," she said. "I feel good about the responses I get when I sing. It's just a natural talent."

International 'debate' leads to lengthy journey for Old Glory

By Spc. Cesar G. Soriano
29th MPAD

It's the tale of an American flag that flew from continent to shining continent and back.

The travels of one Stars and Stripes began in December when soldiers from half a dozen countries started a friendly "my flag is bigger than yours" debate in Zagreb.

Canadian Maj. Tim Dunne, deputy chief of

coalition press information center, was working as president of the U.N. lounge in Zagreb. The Canadians invited Americans to the lounge one day, who in turn decided to hang a small, desk-sized American flag on the wall.

Not wanting to be undone, recalls Dunne, the Canadians, then Dutch, then Belgians kept coming back with larger and larger flags.

"The U.S. was constantly kidded about their tiny flag," said Dunne, "until Lt. Ruey Newsom of the MASH stationed there wrote his home

state of Kentucky for a new flag."

Newsom's congressman sent the troops a 4-by-6 foot flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. After flying in Zagreb, the Canadians decided to fly it over the "Silent Witness" memorial in Gander, Newfoundland, sight of the plane crash that killed more than 250 soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Kentucky that were killed 10 years ago. "It seemed most appropriate since the flag was from Kentucky," Dunne said, a native Newfoundlander.

'There come times when we go out and do dangerous but noble things.'



Spc. Cesar G. Soriano

Shalikashvili pauses at Task Force Eagle headquarters.

Shalikashvili, from page 1

"I find any threat against IFOR to be a gross violation of the Dayton Agreement. I will treat it as such, and find it totally unacceptable," he said.

"We will not hesitate to be very resolute with anyone who, in fact, threatens us."

The convoy of HMMWVs driving to Tuzla West from the Tuzla Main airfield was stopped by Shalikashvili twice, who wanted to

get out and visit with troops along the way. He got out to talk to soldiers manning Checkpoint Oscar and visited the barracks of 3-325th Infantry (Airborne Combat Team) soldiers living in an old MIG fighter hangar. Shalikashvili chatted with Spc. Karl Hopkins and Cpl. Daniel Hofecker for nearly 10 minutes about their living conditions and the differences among the MREs of various countries.

"I know it's not easy, but you're doing (your job) well," he told Hopkins and Hofecker while the three huddled around a kerosene heater. "Take care of each other so you go home in one piece."

In Tuzla West, Shalikashvili and his entourage visited soldiers barracks, the showers, dining facility, game room and even attended the grand opening of the camp's new Post Exchange, where the line snaked several hundred yards. He

stopped to shake hands, sign autographs and pose for photos with troops.

"I feel good that we're here. I think that there come times when we go out and do dangerous but noble things ... This is one of those times," he told servicemembers.

He warned deployed units against letting their guard down over the next several months.

"Only the very best units can go out with the same magnificence as when they came in ... And I have no doubt that you all and all your allied comrades will go out in style on the last day."

In the meantime, he said, "it's going to be hard, long days; hard long hours. Do your job as I know you will and take care of each other, as you absolutely must."

Shalikashvili also visited soldiers at Task Force Eagle headquarters at Tuzla Main.

Steel Castle, from page 1

The population at Tuzla East has jumped from about 130 soldiers to 250 in the span of two weeks because of additional assigned soldiers, and brigade officials anticipate more than 1,700 soldiers will eventually call Steel Castle home.

The main challenges for the engineer brigade headquarters troops have been overcoming harsh elements and logistical problems and improving the living conditions for the soldiers, said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Chartier, HHC first sergeant. Some issues include building more permanent tents and work areas, heated and spacious latrines and showers. "Soldiers are looking forward to moving to a permanent base camp where they can have a semi-permanent place to live and can set up how they want," he said. "From the time we hit the ground, we were living in the muck and mud."

"Every move we get is one step up," he said. "We went from sleeping on a plot of land with chickens, to a muddy field, to a grassy field with marshes, to here."

Chartier said Tuzla East is basically a swamp. "You can see that when the engineers drop the rocks and people walk on them, the ground is like a sponge. Still, the ground here is more level (than before), tents are off the ground and they have floor boards." Morale has also improved, he said.

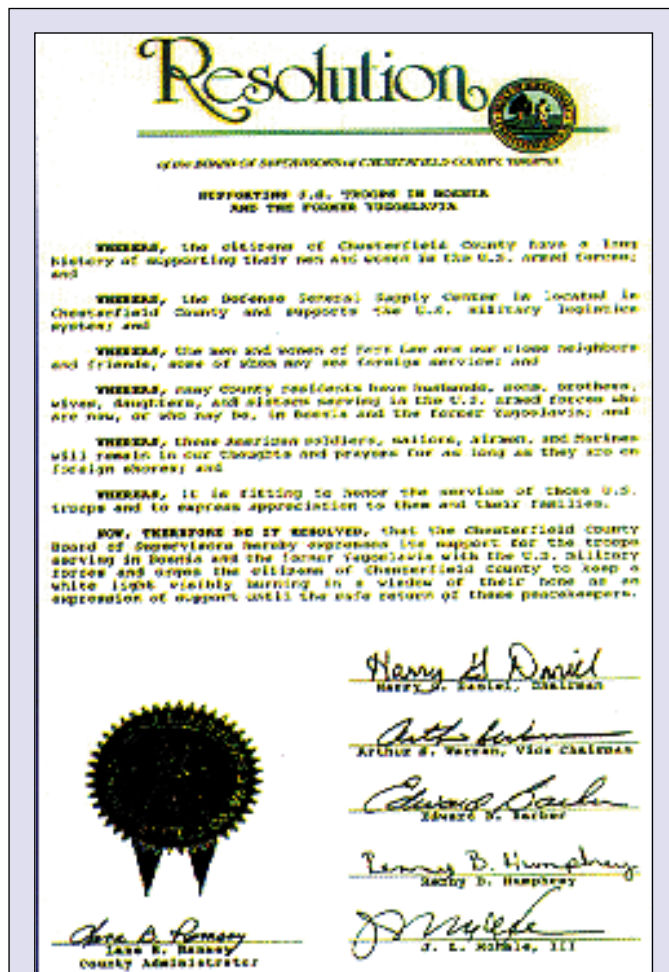
Although the brigade is receiving some support, movement is slow because everything must be sought from Tuzla Main. Hot T-rations are served twice daily along with fresh apples, oranges, milk, bread and other staples. Occasionally, soldiers can convoy into Tuzla Main to take showers. The attempt to bring the Super Bowl to Tuzla East didn't pan out, but efforts are being made to bring more morale-building activities to soldiers. New heated, indoor showers should arrive to the current camp in a few days, Chartier said.

"When we first got the floorboards in the tent, soldiers were real excited," he said. As you get more comfortable, though, you start wanting more."

Capt. Peter Scheets, commander of HHC engineer brigade, has been working closely with Chartier on life support and morale issues. "We're trying to find an extra tent or area for a TV and VCR so soldiers can relax when they're not on duty or sleeping—also a place where they can write and drink sodas," he said. "One of the toughest things for soldiers is the monotony, not having time or a place to do other things." He said the unit also brought along some sports and games to set up.

Scheets and Chartier share a sleeping and work tent that triples as an orderly and mail room. It still has some straw for floors. The two share their tent with a groundhog that visits. "He thinks it's spring," said Chartier, stepping on the straw where the animal enters the tent. "Still, it's better than living with chickens."

"Tuzla East will be our home for a long while," Chartier said.



The Board of Supervisors of Chesterfield County, Virginia — located near Fort Lee and home of the Defense General Supply Center — recently approved a resolution declaring the county's support for U.S. troops in Bosnia. County Administrator Lane B. Ramsey has asked citizens to keep a white light burning in their windows to show their support.